

PRIORITY 100: PLACE EASTERN TURKEY



EXPLORE THE EAST

Eastern Turkey stands in stark contrast to the better-known Western Turkish Mediterranean fringe. A ruggedly alluring land, Eastern Turkey has a landscape as impressive as it is diverse. Its ethnic diversity has also led to much turmoil over the last 100-200 years. The Ottomans banned the name "Armenia," the Kurds rebelled and are still rebelling, and millions of refugees have poured to and through the region fleeing their war-torn homelands.

There are 11 provinces that makeup Eastern Turkey, and it occupies about 19% of the land of Turkey. It has a population of approximately 6,000,000...300 of whom are followers of Jesus. It is the most challenging region for foreigners and locals to live spiritually, politically, and economically. These challenges have dominated an area that has been a hotbed of conflict for the past 1,000 years.

Key Cities

ERZURUM

VAN

KARS

TUNCELI

ELAZIĞ

ERZINCAN

Eastern Turkey

WHY PRIORITIZE THE EAST?

The Eastern Turkey region has been home to political turmoil during the last 100 years. Here is where millions of Armenians used to live, and millions of Kurds still do. These two groups have clashed with the Turkish government, or the other way around, to form a region where suspicion and violence thrive.

This suspicion and violence cause the Turkish government to severely limit access to the region by foreigners, thus limiting access to workers from any country. Not only this, but the standard of living here is challenging, thus adding to the lack of workers in the region.

Three of the most populous groups of unengaged peoples in all of Turkey live here: Kurmanji Kurds, Zaza Kurds, and Alevis. In the southeastern region, Diyarbakir is the secular, nationalistic, and political center for Kurds. Tunceli and Bingol, here in the eastern region, are the more religious centers for Sunni and Alevi Kurds.

Of the roughly 6 million Kurds and Turks that live here, as of 2020, there are only 300 believers (.005%) and about 5-10 churches (roughly 1 church for every 1 million people)—making this region one of the most unengaged regions in the world.



PRAYER

01 Pray for political peace between the government and the Kurdish **POLITICAL** party (PKK) so that the gospel can move freely.

02 Pray for the few churches and local believers to be strengthened and full of wisdom and boldness.

03 Pray for opportunities to engage the large Zaza and Kurmanji-speaking Kurdish population in this region. Many of whom are Alevi and Sunnis.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Farming:** Agriculture is a mainstay in this region. People who can get government, or NGO, jobs in agriculture can bring a lot to this poor and rural region.
- **University students:** there are around 20 Universities in the region that students can choose from to further their education and have access to this least accessed region.
- **Business:** either starting a new company that the government would allow in this area or getting a job in the west that will move you out here; either option is complex and not abundant.